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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/04/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [EG](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN MFA ON BASRAH, EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ

REF: BAGHDAD 1007

Classified By: ECPO Minister Counselor William R. Stewart
for reasons 1.4 (b).

11. (C) MFA Spokesman and Senior Advisor Hossam Zaki told Minister Counselor April 3 that the Foreign Ministry decided not to issue a statement concerning events in Basrah since it involved "Shia on Shia fighting." MinCouns noted that Maliki had used ISF, not sectarian forces, to take on the Sadrists. "I would like to believe it was a nationalist response," Zaki opined, "but I know what it was: Shia on Shia." MinCouns reiterated reftel points and the Ambassador's March 29 message to FM Aboul Gheit that now was a crucial time for Arabs to step up and support Maliki in the face of Iranian machinations in Iraq. Zaki was remained unmoved. "If we say something, we will look like fools. And we are not fooled."

12. (C) MinCouns asked about Egypt's plan to send an ambassador to Baghdad. Zaki said that he was awaiting an Iraqi response to Egyptian questions about logistics for a security assessment team they plan to send to Iraq in preparation for the return of an ambassador. Zaki said the Iraqi deputy foreign minister had approached him at the Arab League summit in Damascus and asked if Zaki had received the Iraqi answers to the GoE questions; Zaki told him he had not. He did not say how long it would take to send the security team once Iraq answers Egypt's questions, or how long the assessment would take, but stressed that it was still the GoE's intention to send an ambassador to Baghdad.
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